

in the hull (~100 ton). The other would be smaller, and would be led to the lowest practical level, for final de-watering when the hull reaches the surface. The air connection would have a cap capable of resisting external sea pressure during the descent, but no isolating valve. The large de-watering connection would have an external ball valve, which would be opened to flood the hull and for de-watering on the sea bed. The small de-watering connection would have a blanking cap which could be burnt off if seized. For final de-watering at the surface, the ball valve on the large connection would be shut if operable, blanked if not. Model tests will be needed to establish the best stand-pipe layout to cope with angles of heel.

8. TRANSPORT FROM STORAGE SITE

This would be by semi-submersible barge or floating dock, as neither the MBTs or towing arrangements could be assumed to be operational.

9. CONCLUSION

Underwater storage at a shallow water site is feasible for some period which cannot be established without doing more work on corrosion rates. However, this is likely to be much greater than the current timescale for establishing a NIREX facility. Any intention to store for very long periods may result in limitations on site selection due to sea-bed geology.